

making tracks

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Yosemite: Art of an American Icon

One of the most beautiful places on earth, Yosemite has inspired artists and photographers for decades. An exhibition, YOSEMITE: ART OF AN AMERICAN ICON, is at the Oakland Museum of California May 19 through August 26. The artwork shows Yosemite's landscape and natural wonder. Some 150 paintings, baskets and photographs make up the exhibit that spans the mid-19th century to the present. To see the exhibit at the Oakland Museum, take Amtrak California's San Joaquin to Oakland. The Museum, located at 10th & Oak Streets, is a short 10-12-block walk or taxi ride from the Amtrak Oakland Station, which is located at The Embarcadero at Alice Street.

The Yosemite exhibit is arranged in four chronological sections:

1855-1890: Nature's Cathedral A selection of photographs and landscape paintings documenting the presence of Miwok and Paiute native people in Yosemite.

1890-1916: The People's Playground

Yosemite became a national park and a popular resort. The start of the Yosemite Valley Railroad in 1905 made the park widely accessible. Photographs show the impact of tourism, and, in 1916, the National Park Service established Indian Field Days, an annual fair/rodeo/market-place, which continued until 1929.

1917-1969: An Icon Comes of Age

Yosemite artists created artwork that gave the park a new identity as visitation doubled. It was during this period that Ansel Adams created his iconic images that are still popular with the public.

1970-Present: Revisiting Yosemite

Focuses on the park in a modern light. Artists look to the future of the park through their work.



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Greening the State Locomotive Fleet

Department of Transportation owns 17 diesel locomotives that are currently in service on the Amtrak California intercity routes in Northern and Southern California. The Electromotive Division (EMD) of General Motors built 15 of the state-owned locomotives, and General Electric (GE) built the remaining two locomotives. When manufactured, the EMD locomotives were EPA Tier 0 certified, although federal emission standards did not require this level of compliance at the time. The EMD-built locomotives were the cleanest operating locomotives in the United States at the time of their delivery to California.

Federal Environmental Protection Agency standards now require that all locomotives manufactured prior to 2001 must meet Tier 0 standards at the time of next engine overhaul. The two GE locomotives in the state fleet will be upgraded to Tier 0 standards in early 2008 when both are completely overhauled. Over the next two fiscal years, all 17 locomotives will be equipped with an Automatic Start Stop System that reduces excessive engine idling, thus reducing exhaust emissions and saving fuel. Future overhauls will bring the 15 EMD locomotives and their Head End Power (HEP) engines to EPA Tier 2 standards. HEP generator sets installed in the EMD locomotives currently meet EPA Tier 1 standards.



Steven G. Fretwell, Chief of the Locomotive Technology Branch in the Division of Rail manages the locomotive overhaul process. In his position with Division of Rail, Steve is responsible for the safety, maintenance and operation of all State-owned passenger rail equipment. His work now focuses on the reduction of locomotive exhaust emissions.

Fretwell has 42 years experience in the railroad industry, the past 16 spent with the Caltrans Division of Rail where he has been involved in passenger rail operations, train service implementation, rail equipment procurement, equipment operations and equipment maintenance. Previously employed by two major railroad companies, he has served as Diesel Mechanic, Foreman, General Foreman and Trainmaster during his career.

Steve Fretwell's work in reducing locomotive exhaust emissions earned him a nomination for one of the 31st Annual Clean Air Awards. The Clean Air Awards are presented each year to businesses, individuals, agencies and organizations that are working to improve air quality in the Sacramento region. Steve was nominated for the award by Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality District.

Patrol Stop Makes Debut

Cindy Camara, Amtrak District Stations Manager and Sergeant Dennis Ball of the Fresno Police Department cut yellow police tape to officially welcome the police department to the Fresno Amtrak station. The small office will be a police patrol stop used by local law enforcement officials.



Dead Sea Scrolls Come to San Diego

The San Diego Natural History Museum, located in San Diego's historic Balboa Park, will present the most comprehensive exhibition of Dead Sea Scrolls ever assembled in any country beginning on June 29, 2007. Covering two floors and 12,000 square feet, the exhibit will run for six months, and brings together materials from Israel, Jordan, the Russian National Library, and the British National Library. Twenty-seven Dead Sea scrolls – ten exhibited for the first time ever – will be on display over the course of the exhibition. Among them will be the best preserved of all Deuteronomy manuscripts containing the text of the Ten Commandments. Visitors will see interpretive exhibits and materials, authentic artifacts, a stunning virtual reality tour of ancient Qumran shown in the Museum's giant screen theater, and the original excavation equipment used in the 1950's.



Further information and tickets to the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition can be obtained by visiting www.sdscrolls.org or by calling 877-946-7797. Group tickets are available at 800-290-4616. Mention Amtrak as transportation to the exhibit. Visitors arriving aboard Amtrak Pacific Surfliner trains 562, 564 or 566 will be able to travel directly to the Museum via special shuttle buses. Tickets for the shuttle can be purchased at the same time you buy your Amtrak tickets. Call 1-800-USA-RAIL for further information.

Take Amtrak to Ashland

Ashland, Oregon is a unique place to visit, with snow-capped mountain peaks, a major theater company, three smaller theaters, art galleries, museums and fine restaurants, all in a picturesque setting.

Home to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ashland has nine other theater groups that perform a variety of productions, including musicals, comedies, and experimental theater. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, in its 61st year, offers Shakespeare plays from mid-February through October. There are three settings for the productions: newly renovated 1,200-seat Allen Pavilion of the outdoor Elizabethan Theatre; modern, 600-seat Angus Bowmer Theatre, and the 140-seat Black Swan, a perfect setting for intimate performances.



Ashland boasts many forms of recreation. Mt. Ashland is popular in the winter with 23 ski runs and 80 miles of cross-country trails. Bear Creek Bike and Nature Trail is a favorite of bikers and hikers. There is river rafting and jet boat rides on Rogue and Klamath Rivers, and mountain lakes for fishermen. Golfers can tee off at one of five gold courses in the area, and there are two wineries in Ashland offering daily wine tasting. Not to be missed is the Science Works Hands-On Museum, a family attraction offering 80 interactive science exhibits and special festivals, lectures and summer camps.

Just 15 miles from the California border, Ashland is easy to reach on Amtrak California. Take San Joaquin or Capitol Corridor trains to Sacramento and connect with Amtrak Thruway Motorcoaches that take passengers through Northern California and into Oregon with stops in Ashland and Medford. Reservations are required on all San Joaquin trains and motorcoaches. Amtrak motorcoaches are operated only for those passengers who are also using rail service as part of their trip.

Sun, Fun, Salsa – Oxnard Salsa Festival Time



Gather up the family and hop aboard the Pacific Surfliner for a traffic-free trip to the Oxnard Salsa Festival, July 28 and 29, 2007 at Plaza Park in Downtown Oxnard. It's just a short three-block walk from the Amtrak station. Meet the spicy hot pepper himself as he strolls the grounds in his distinctive yellow sombrero, cool dude shades, big smile and, well, his bright red pepper outfit.

There is plenty for the whole family to enjoy – food, music, dancing, and lots of free entertainment. Admission to the Salsa Festival is free. And the best part is if you come on Amtrak, kids ages 2-15 ride for half price. That's up to two kids with each full fare adult. So join the fun this July and be part of the 14th Annual Oxnard

Salsa Festival. Visit Amtrak.com for fares, schedules and tickets. For more information about the festival, go to OxnardSalsaFestival.com. Ole!

20% on Amtrak to Santa Barbara

Save 20 percent off Amtrak fares to all destinations in Santa Barbara County including Solvang with the "Santa Barbara Car Free 20 Percent Savings Offer." Valid for travel through December 13, 2007 (blackout dates and restrictions apply); receive the savings with an official promotion code. Register online at www.SantaBarbaraCarFree.org (click on News & Promotions) or call 805-696-1100 and leave your address to get the code in the mail. Amtrak reservations must be made at least three days in advance of departure by calling Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL, or logging on to Amtrak.com, or visiting any staffed station.

Explore Carpinteria

Carpinteria is a casual seaside community just 12 miles south of Santa Barbara. The beach is popular because of its gentle terrain and calm waves. Seals, sea lions and an occasional gray whale can be seen in the area December through May. Tidepools contain starfish, crabs, snails, octopuses and sea urchins. A popular campground is located adjacent to the beach, and there is bird watching at Salt Marsh Nature Park.

The Spanish named the area Carpinteria because the Chumash tribe, which lived in the area, had a large seagoing canoe-building enterprise, or "carpentry shop" there. Surf tar was available to seal the boats, and you can still see the tar oozing out of the bluffs at Tar Pits Park, just south of the campground.

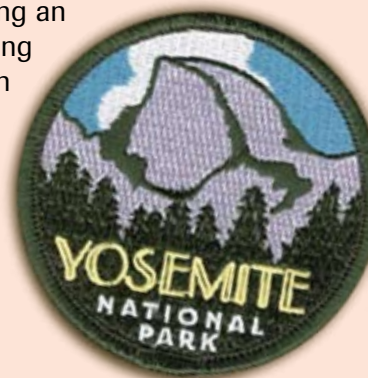
This summer, Carpinteria will celebrate ten years of Pacific Surfliner service to its modern beachside station facility. Pacific Surfliner trains offer five daily roundtrips between Carpinteria and Los Angeles. Passengers may continue south from Los Angeles to San Diego on all five of the Pacific Surfliner trips from Carpinteria (one requires a change of trains in Los Angeles) and four of the five northbound trains to Carpinteria originate in San Diego.



Yosemite

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If you would like to visit Yosemite in person, it's easy on Amtrak California's San Joaquin train. From the Bay Area, Sacramento or Bakersfield, take the train to Merced. A VIA shuttle will be standing by to take you through the Gold Country to Yosemite. You will see El Capitan, Bridalveil Falls, Half Dome and more. For a one-day trip, take the early morning San Joaquin train. You will arrive in Yosemite mid-day to explore the park before making an evening return trip.



Solvang: The “Danish Capital of America”

It's easy to travel to California's own Danish village of Solvang via Amtrak. Just take the Pacific Surfliner train to Santa Barbara. Then board an Amtrak Thruway Motorcoach for a quick trip right to the heart of “The Danish Capital of America”. Solvang (meaning sunny fields) was founded in 1911 by pioneering Danish-Americans from Iowa intent on bringing their culture to the golden state. Named by Sunset Magazine as one of the “10 Most Beautiful Small Towns in the Western United States,” Solvang offers so much to see and do that it's a good idea to plan a couple of days for your visit.



Within easy walking distance of the Amtrak stop, check into one of the 14 charming inns or hotels. This pedestrian-friendly village has Danish bakeries with those renowned delicious treats, a wide variety of restaurants, some featuring Danish smorgasbord, wonderful gift and antique stores, clothing boutiques, chocolate shops and more than a dozen wine tasting rooms. Solvang and the surrounding Santa Ynez Valley were the locations of the award-winning wine-trip movie “Sideways” – experience all the tastes without having to drive.

How about some history and culture? There's the Elverhoj Museum of Danish History & Art; Old Mission Santa Ines; Hans Christian Andersen Museum and the Solvang Vintage Motorcycle Museum—all within easy walking distance of one another. From June through September, don't miss live, professional theater under the stars with PCPA Theaterfest's world-class productions in the 700-seat Solvang Festival Theater (www.pcpa.org). For complete information, see www.SolvangUSA.com or www.SYVVA.com or call 1-800-742-2843 for a free 44-page Visitors Guide.

Sequoia Summer Connection

Starting on Memorial Day and running through Labor Day Weekend, a new partnership between City of Visalia and the National Park Service called the Sequoia Shuttle will provide easy car-free access to locations throughout the famous Park.

Operating from the Visalia Transportation Center, home to Amtrak's Thruway buses, the shuttles will operate seven days a week and are scheduled to offer convenient connections with Amtrak's bus arriving at 12:40pm.

Each shuttle is equipped with plenty of room for luggage and passengers will enjoy comfortable seats and an educational video about the National Parks during the two-hour ride to the park.

Sequoia Shuttle stops at Giant Forest Museum where it connects with two free in-park shuttle routes that travel



throughout the Giant Forest. Sequoia National Park is home to some of the largest giant sequoia trees in the world including the General Sherman Tree. Information about fares and schedules is available at www.sequoiashuttle.com.

Rail Safety Depends Upon You

If you need to cross railroad tracks, whether walking or driving, remember the only safe place to do so is at a designated public crossing with a crossbuck, flashing red lights, marked pavement and crossing, and a gate. If you walk across the tracks at any other place, you not only threaten your life, but you are trespassing and can be ticketed or fined.

Should you come to a crossing and see flashing lights, do not ignore them. These lights herald the approach of a train and you need to stop. Never walk or drive past flashing lights and around lowered gates at a crossing. Wait until the train has passed, the lights have stopped flashing and the gates go up completely. If the gates remain down, there is a second train coming on that or an adjacent track and you must wait until the signals tell you that all is clear.

Despite their very great size, trains do not make a lot of noise. Modern trains are quiet with no "clickety-clack" sound.

And, you cannot always feel the vibration of an oncoming train. Because of its overall length, the average modern freight train takes a mile or more to stop. That's the length of 18 football fields.

So please take this advice from California Operation Lifesaver, a non-profit safety program dedicated to preventing tragedies on or near railroad tracks: Taking a shortcut at railroad tracks can shorten your life. Stay Off the Tracks! Stay Away from the Tracks! And Stay Alive!



Excellence in Transportation: Santa Ana Pedestrian Bridge



Transportation Director Will Kempton announced the winners of the Department's 2007 Excellence In Transportation awards in April. Among the ninety statewide entrants was Santa Ana Pedestrian Bridge, chosen as the winner in the Safety Category.

A panel of judges that included professional engineers, environmental specialists, transportation planners, landscape design experts and an historical architect reviewed this year's entrants.

Entries were received from local and public agencies, private contractors and consultants, as well as from the California Department of Transportation.

The Santa Ana Pedestrian Bridge project was a partnership of Orange County Transportation Authority, Metrolink and California Department of Transportation.



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